846 751 825 278 856 them till they burn. The smoke then rises, and he exposes the child to it for a long time : the body, face, nose and mouth. The baby begins to cry ; he sneezes, he coughs ; this is just what is wanted. Then the doctor takes what remains of the pieces of skin, grinds them, makes a powder, mixes it with *tihuhlu* (1) grease of the year before last and consequently hard enough to make an ointment. With this ointment he rubs the whole body of the child, especially the joints, which he extends gently in order to assist the baby's growth.

846 751 853 All this fumigation and manipulation is intended to act as a preventive. Having been thus exposed to all external dangers, dangers which are represented by the beasts of the bush, the child may go out of the hut. He is now able "to cross the foot prints of wild beasts" (tjemakanya mitila) without harm. Snakes will not bite him, at any rate their bite will not hurt him ; lions will not kill him. The remainder of the powder is put into a little bit of reed closed at both ends, which the mother has to carry with her during the whole nursing period in order to continue the treatment.

846 755 753 821 This rite of the broken pot is also the great preventive remedy against the much dreaded ailment of babies, *convulsions*. If a child suffers from this, they will say : "a tlalile shirengelen," viz. "he did not find any help in the broken pot" and the parents will go to another doctor whose drugs are more powerful, to have the child once more exposed to the smoke. It may even be that a grown-up man will undergo this treatment again, if he has been ill with convulsions, but, in this case, the broken pot with its pieces of skin is put on the head of the patient, which has been first covered with a wisp of cuscuta (hare dja yendjeyendje). The great aim of all the medication of children by the "milombyana" is also to fight against convulsions, as we shall see (2).

(1) The tihuhlu are the seeds of the nkuhlu tree known under the name of mafureira. They are oleaginous and the fat (mafura) obtained from them is very much used for external applications amongst the Thongas.

(2) In *Savage Childhood* p. 12, Dudley Kidd describes this "baptism of smoke" amongst Zulus. Some dirt is scraped from the father's body and is mixed with other drugs in order to impart to the child his ancestral spirit. Another ingredient

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

842 The Thonga child is always received into this world with great joy by the whole family. If it is a girl, it means oxen to buy a wife for one of the sons later on ; therefore it means increase not only in the wealth but in the number of the members of the family. If it is a boy, there is no direct material enrichment, but the clan has been strengthened and the name of the father is glorified and perpetuated. In the case of the birth of a first-born child (ñwana wa matibula), a special ceremony is performed at the end of the first week. When the grandmother has smeared the hut, she goes home, summons all the female relatives, sometimes as many as ten or fifteen ; they take with them food, ochre and fat prepared for this purpose. Two or three men accompany them. They enter the village of the child executing a special dance called *khana*, and singing the following song (which is the proper song to glorify a first-born) :

I celebrate my pot which has done *ngelebendje*...

They compare the child with a pot of clay which has gone through the firing process. It has been tried as one always tries a pot by letting it fall to the ground ; but it is not shattered, because it has not cracked in the furnace, it has kept intact ! This is what is meant by the descriptive adverb ngelebendje.

846 Then they smear the baby, the mother, the father, everybody 851 in the village with ochre. It is a great feast. A goat will be 603 killed, if possible, because the father and mother have "found a village" (kuma muti) by the child, they have "grown roots" (mila mitju). This is a law, but its omission is not taboo. When the grandparents do not perform this ceremony, it is an insult to the parents of the child, but no evil consequence will follow.

765 is a meteorite ground to fine powder. It is interesting to compare this use of the
753 meteorite with the fact that, amongst the Thongas, this fumigation is intended to prevent
821 convulsions. Convulsions, as we shall see (Part VI. Chap. II. B) are caused by the mysterious power of Heaven. The meteorite has fallen from Heaven. Thus the baptism of smoke aims at bringing the child under the influence of the two main elements of Bantu religion : the ancestor gods and Heaven.

851 a grown up child (1). The expression *fuya ñwana* confirms our explanation. This custom is not a protective rite : the physician has nothing to do with it ; it is really an act by which the new-born child becomes a regular member of the community. The strict prohibition of renewed conception before this rite has been accomplished is evidently dictated by the feeling that another child must not appear before this one has been duly received into the family.

6) The weaning.

862 856 A whole year, even more, will elapse after the *boha puri* before the little one can be weaned. He will learn to speak and to walk, and it is only when his intelligence is sufficiently developed to allow him to run small errands that the date of the weaning will be fixed. When his parents can send him to the next hut to ask for snuff and see him coming back holding the tobacco, they say : "Now the time has come !"

The rite of weaning is accomplished in the following manner in Nondwane. (Mboza).

862 824 First of all, the father looks for a young *ntjopfa* tree which has only one root. The ntjopfa is an anonacea bush, which colonists sometimes call the wild custard. (Its fruit is very much like custard fruit and it is said that the true cultivated custard can be grafted on it). The root of this tree is said to have the property of making people forget. The mother cooks a pot of Kafir corn in which she has put the medicine. This will help the child to forget the breast. But the great act is the *hondlola* which takes place under the direction of the physician. The mother pounds some mealies, pours water on them and adds some leaven ; in this way she makes a little light beer (buputju). She keeps a little of the bran of the pounded mealies. The doctor comes, kills a chicken and sprinkles this bran with the blood and *hahla*, viz. offers a regular sacrifice. He prays to the spirits of his own family and asks those of the child's family to

862 782 755

(1) This word *khuma* is also employed to designate boys who have not yet gone through the circumcision school. *Bukhuna* is the despicable state of uncircumcision. The state of a child before the ceremony of *boha puri* is another kind of bukhuna.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

862 join with them in blessing the little one. The beak of the sacrificed
782 hen, one of the claws and one of the feathers (psirungulo) will be
755 tied together round the child's neck. A mat is spread on the ground ; the child is laid on it and greased with oil and powder brought by the physician. Then he is smeared and rubbed with the bran. The particles which fall on the mat are called *timhore*. They are gathered by the mother who makes a ball of them. In the meantime the father looks for the nest of a certain kind of large ant which is common in the bush. It lives in the earth, but the opening of its hole is tolerably large. There the mother goes at sunset. She introduces the ball into the hole so that the ant will be obliged to take all the *timhore* into the nest. Then she returns home without looking behind her. It is taboo ; should she transgress this rule, she would bring back disease to her child.

This rite is the ordinary *hondlola rite* which is performed in this or in a similar way at the close of any serious disease as the conclusion of the treatment, with the view of taking away the defilement of disease. After having *hondlola*, the physician asks for the payment of his fees. For a child he will ask ten shillings or five coins of five hundred reis (1).

854 This hondlola reveals to us the true conception of the nursing period held by the Natives. For them these three first years of the child's life are a period of disease ; so many perils threaten the little one's well-being that he can hardly be considered healthy. He is during the whole time under the supervision of the physician, who takes leave of the little patient on the day of the weaning.

854 This view of infancy accounts also for some other taboos. It
789 is *yila* for instance to say of a child who is particularly fat : Wa tika, he is heavy : this would bring mishap to him. One must say : A kota ribye, he is like a stone! It is taboo also in Shiluvane to make use before a child of the word *mfene*, baboon. There is a disease which is called by that name and it would come upon him. One must say : the thing which inhabits the hills, and so on...

(1) In the Mpfumu clan the rite of weaning is somewhat different. I have published in " Les Ba-Ronga " a description of it given by Tobane. It seems that the elements of the cotton string rite and of the broken pot rite are mixed with the proper weaning rite. I think that the description of Mboza is more trustworthy.

I. *Love charms.*

832 584 If a boy has not been successful in his " gangisa ", if he is despised by the girls and has no chance of being accepted, a special rite is performed to help him to find a wife. The Ba-Ronga do not know the love-philter as such, but they have a substitute for it ; the old village cock is put on the lad's head and kept there for a long time ; the cock scratches him with his claws ; he is then allowed to go. The boy will now succeed ; he will be like the cock, who never lacks spouses! (Mboza).

Other charms are used for girls, especially a certain medicine which produces an abundant lather when boiled in water. The physician washes the girl's body with it, after which she will " appear " (a ta boneka) to the eyes of would-be suitors (Tobane).

755 832 584 Should however a girl not find a husband in the lawful way, she has another means at her disposal—marriage by abduction, and thus no one, or hardly any one, remains unmarried amongst the Thongas. Mankhelu, who was a great doctor, treated this "complaint of singleness " with more seriousness! He used his strongest medicines to heal the boy or the girl who was unable to find a partner in life. This is the treatment followed by him. He takes a she-goat, in the case of a boy, a he-goat in that of girl, and anoints it with fat mixed with his precious medicinal powder ; he rubs the animal (hondla) from the mouth to the tail, stretches out all its limbs and kills it. No prayer is offered, but the *psanyi* (the half digested grass which is found in the stomach) is carefully collected. The boy is then called, enters his own hut, spreads a mat on the ground, sits on it quite naked and rubs his whole body with this substance. " A tihorola, a tilurulula " says Mankhelu. He rubs away from himself all his filth. When he has finished, he coughs to call the doctor, who comes and gathers into a pot all the " timhorola," the particles which have fallen on the mat ; he takes a portion of this and squeezes it into a small bag of lizard-skin so as to make a *shitjungulu* or amulet. The sister must come after sunset without any clothing into the boy's

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhorola* will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ; or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease ; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination ola, ula, ulula in these verbs ; it means generally to undo, to take away).

If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (Buta).

When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobota* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

764 783 them in the next chapter. When they come back from the pool, one of the men climbs on the hut and removes from its top the crown of woven grass, which was its glory during the life of its master. The hut participates in the general state of uncleanness of all his belongings. This crown will be put before the door to close it, and no one will dare to enter any more till the day of the crushing of the hut.

In the Mpfumo clans, that first evening, the grave diggers have some preliminary purification rites to go through: 1) a *hondla*, viz. an ablution with leaves of the nkuhlu tree which have been crushed in a mortar with some water; 2) in former times they used to make a pipe with the shell of a raw sala, place in it an ember and a little hen's dung, and *smoke* this disgusting mixture.

765 783 From that first day, the grave diggers and the widows, when eating, must use special spoons *(psihanti)* made from old broken calabashes. It is taboo for them to take food with their fingers from the common plate during the five days of the Great Mourning.

The night comes. All the widows sleep in the open, their huts, which belonged to the deceased, being taboo. If it rains, they sleep in the other huts of the village.

765 755 783 On the following day, the *doctor* comes and proceeds to the medical purification of the widows and of the grave-diggers. This will consist in three successive *vapour baths*, on the first, third and fifth day after death. These *mahungulo* are administered in the same way as the one I have already described in connection with the infantile rites (p. 55). But the drugs boiled in the pot and the pills burnt in the fire are considered very powerful, especially those of the first day, so much so that the pot in which they have been prepared must be broken on the grave. The two grave-diggers and the first widow must be exposed together to this particularly powerful disinfectant, the widow keeping on her old clothing during the operation. The second and third bath, those provided for the other widows, are not so strong, and the pot can be kept. In the case of these the widow does not enter together with the grave-diggers. These rites, as

727 They have killed... So they are exposed to the mysterious and
775 deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a
828 medical treatment. What is the *nuru* ? *Nuru* is the spirit of the
783 slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him
789 and may drive him into insanity : his eyes swell, protrude and
761 become inflamed. He will go out of his mind, be attacked by giddiness (ndzululwan) and the thirst for blood may lead him to fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is required : the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (Lurulula comes from nuru, plur. miluru (1).

In what does this treatment consist ? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons because their hands are

764 (1) We met with the notion of *nuru* for the first time à propos of the rite of
775 luma (p. 400) ; we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV).
761 The nuru is to be feared not only in the case of slain enemies but in connexion with any human corpse. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced. A traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla). He had climbed on to the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground. He was not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot ; his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was
764 seen for years "saying mpha" (it was shining), the teeth "saying bva" (descriptive
775 adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from
755 the tree and again saw the skull. Spoon was one of them. The fire had just passed
789 by again. "We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over like a
761 ball. We did not know it was a human skull... When we got home we began to be seized by the drunkenness of nuru, the disease of those who have killed a man. During the night we were delirious (hanta-hanteka), our eyes swelled and were full of exudations (malanga), the four of us, Trukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw that we had killed a man there! The medicine-man who understands the treatment of nuru, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called us to his village. We stood in a line before him ; he poured a little of his powder into the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then he insulted us saying ; "You will die! Who began beating that skull?" Each of us denied having given the first blow. Then he said : "Take care! Do not go there any more nor near that nkuhlu tree where another corpse has been burnt under the leaves! Go away."

514 When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this nuru medicine
789 by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The
775 giddiness will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with
626 a gun, the nuru is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of
761 the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the composition of the nuru drug.

136 larva of a large Calandra which swarms in the stems of the palm
825 trees of the marsh (p. 4). The *Shitambela*, a big Buprestida
262 (Sternocera Orissa) is roasted by the shepherds and eaten after they have torn off its elytra.

136 *Hymenoptera. Wasps* are called *Mupfi* or *Mupfu* (mu-mi),
755 and are divided into four different classes : the *Mupfu* proper (Belonogaster), the *Tlatlanhongana*, the *Bamaandlopfu*, a grey species, and the *Mumpfundlopfu*, a large black species which burrows in the soil. When someone has been stung by a wasp, the others laugh at him. If he resents being made fun of, they say to him : "Be not angry ; we do this to help you." They are really trying to divert his attention from the pain in order to
136 comfort him. *Bees* are called *Nyoshi* (yin-tin) and are greatly
262 appreciated for their honey (p. 44). Natives know the males
815 (*djongwe*, dji-ma) the larvae *(shipungwa)*, which they eat with as much pleasure as the honey itself. They call the honeycombs *hahla* (dji-ma) or *shihlenga*, the wax *mumpfu* (mu-mi) and the
136 pollen brought by the bees, *nsindjo*. The curious *Mbonga* (yin-tin)
825 *Bee* is worth special mention, owing to the superstitions which are current regarding it, and the part it plays in certain rites (I. p. 390). This species, which does not sting, digs a narrow passage of two or three feet deep in the soil and excavates a hole of one or two feet broad where it builds its round nest. Natives say that nobody knows what the mbonga does with the earth which it digs out of the cavity in which it makes its nest. No heap of earth is ever seen in the vicinity. The hole is continued under the nest and has no end. It probably extends to subterranean pools where the insects go to drink, — as it is said that no one has ever seen a mbonga drinking from the lake or the well, as the other bees do. Moreover the entrance to a mbonga nest is invisible to the majority of people. It is only certain families who can see it and consequently dig out the precious honey (1). For all these reasons the mbonga is

777 (1) The Libombo family was one of those "which the mbonga loves" (randja). Elias who belongs to it told me that he once paid a visit to one of his neighbours who had just cleaned his village; he discovered a mbonga hole and said to his friend: "There is a mbonga nest in your village." But the man was unable to find it. Elias then dug as deep as his shoulders and found the nest all surrounded by "calabashes" full of honey. He says that when rain falls the little bees cover the entrance of

circulation (p. 63-76). I shall have to content myself with giving the names of some Mammalia and relating some superstitions concerning them. 136

Edentata : two kinds are known, the *Mpandjana* (yin-tin), the ant-bear, which is covered with hair, and the *Kwara* (dji-ma) which has scales. The only Cetacea known is the *Nkomu* (yin-tin), the whale.

Solipedes : *Mangwa* (yin-tin) means zebra, and this term is sometimes applied to horses ; this latter animal is called *Hanshi* (dji-ma), evidently a corruption of the English word. *Mbongolo* (yin-tin), donkey. *Mula* or *Mewula*, mule.

Pachyderma : *Ngulube* (yin-tin), wild boar and also, by extension, domesticated pig. *Mpfubu* (yin-tin), hippopotamus.

Ruminantia : *Homu* (yin-tin), ox. *Nyari* (yin-tin), buffalo. *Hamba* (yin-tin, Ro.), *Nyimpfu* (yin-tin, Dj.), sheep. *Mbuti* (yin-tin), goat. *Mhalamhala* (yin-tin), sable antelope, Hippotragus niger. *Mhala* (yin-tin) (Zulu impala). *Mhunti* (yin-tin), duiker *Hongonyi* (yin-tin), gnu. *Mangulwe* (mu-ba). *Mhetlwa* (yin-tin), water buck. *Nhlangu* (yin-tin), reed buck. *Mhofu* (yin-tin), eland, *Nhutlwa* (yin-tin), giraffe, etc.

Proboscidea : *Ndlopfu* (yin-tin), elephant.

Rodentia : *Mpfundla* (mu-mi), hare, *Nhlolo* (yin-tin), rabbit. *Khondlo* (dj -ma), mouse. *Vondo* (dj -ma), *Phephe* (dj-ma), *Ngole* (yin-tin), etc.

Insectivora : *Shitlulandlela*, mole, lit. the one which crosses the road ; it is a bad omen for a mole to cross your path. *Tjukunyana*, a brownish mole which digs its burrows just below the surface of the ground. Hence the fact that a bracelet made of its skin is employed as medicine against the Filaria, a parasite which makes its way under the skin! 136 777 825 755

Carnivora : *Nsimba* (yin-tin), civet cat. *Shipakana*, cat. *Mbyana* (yin-tin), dog. *Mhisi* (yin-tin), hyena. *Hlolwa*, *Nhlati* (mu-ba), fox. *Yingwe* (yin-tin), leopard. *Ndjau* (Ro.), *nghala* (Dj.), lion, etc. 136

Chiroptera : *Tangadana* (dji-ma, Ro.), *Mangadyana*, (mu-ba. Dj.), bat.

Primates : *Mfene* (yin-tin), baboon. *Habu* (yin-tin), monkey.

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

them. Whatever may be their origin, they form a part of the mental make up of every Native. A careful study of the rites reveals at least three such axioms: Like acts on like and produces like; the part represents the whole and acts on the whole; the spoken wish produces the desired result.

1) *Like acts on like and produces like.* All the elements of Nature are dependent on each other, and if there is a similarity between two of them, they are at once brought into a special relation with each other and begin to influence each other. The application of this principle is universal, in the religious as well as in the dynamistic domain. The Native mind is extremely quick at perceiving a similarity between the most heterogeneous objects or phenomena, and immediately establishes a causal relation between them. We have already met with scores of instances of this law. *Colour* acts on colour; black sheep and black smoke produce a black cloud full of rain (p. 318). *Form* produces a similar form; a necklace of maize grains round the neck of a small-pox patient produces an eruption of small, transparent, pustules which are not dangerous, in place of the large, thick, deadly ones. (See Chapter III. A.) *Disintegration* produces disintegration; the chewing of a bean ensures the melting of the iron ore in the kiln (p. 359). *A certain state of mind* produces a similar condition in living beings, and even in material phenomena; the continence of little children ensures control over the flame of the furnace (p. 115) whilst the passion of married people accelerates disease, and increases the fury of wild beasts, (p. 61) etc. (1)

This kind of magic has been called *imitative magic.* A corollary of this principle is that the image or object representing a thing is in close relation with the thing itself, and any action performed on the image will have its repercussion on the thing represented.

(1) To show how far this action of like on like can go, let me quote this final example which I gave in my paper on *The Magic Conception of Nature amongst Bantus (South African Journal of Science*, Nov. 1920). A magician has had the good luck to discover a crow's nest full of young. He climbs up the tree, and ties all the little birds together by their feet. The mother crow, however, is not at a loss to deliver her progeny. She brings each day a leaf taken from different trees, and places it in the nest. The magician keeps watch. He climbs the tree, looks at the leaf, and recognizes the tree from which it has been taken. He then goes and digs up a piece of root from that tree. After a few days he will have collected quite a bundle of different roots. By that time the little crows will be free, the string which bound them having given way, or having rotted, and the magician will possess a medicine of first rate quality. By means of it he will be able to free any patient from any disease or worry by which he is held fast.

Regular acts of worship are performed also at the
burial (I. p. 142), at the *crushing of the hut* (I. p. 158-163), on the 782
days of *mahloko* (I. p. 215), and at the *adjudication of the inheritance* 765
(I. p. 208). 262

I have already mentioned the stringent taboo in regard to the victims killed in these sacrifices. The portions distributed amongst the different relations must not be eaten either in the village of the deceased, or in those of the various visitors. This meat must be roasted on the road, and eaten on the spot, and it is likewise taboo to season it in any way. The inhabitants of the deceased's village can eat the meat boiled, but it is prohibited to add ground-nuts to the broth.

These are the great family sacrifices, in which the uterine 782
nephews play their curious part, and on the occasion of which family matters are brought up and settled. They play a most important part in the life of the family, and I have therefore described them at length, when treating of the social life of the tribe, as religion and social life are here intimately united. There is therefore no need for me to add much more regarding them here. With their clearly established and typical ritual they form the most definite and settled element of the religious life of the tribe.

Rangane asserts that another offering is regularly performed in the Maluleke district. On the first occasion of the *cooking of the new mealies*, each headman prepares a little of the flour, takes a spoonful of it, and throws it away, praying at the same time to the Ba-Nyai spirits, i. e., the gods of the Ba-Nyai, who have been conquered by the Malulekes. He calls this "magandjelo ya ku ñwantseka," i. e., "sacrifice tasted and thrown away." This is evidently to propitiate the gods, who were the first owners of the country and who might harm or destroy the invaders. Compare p. 377 the respect shown by Mahazule to the Libombo sacred wood, and also the curious request of the Samaritans, II Kings. XVII.

Special Family Sacrifices. By these, I mean particularly those 782
offered *in cases of disease.* The bones having revealed that the 755
disease is caused by the gods (and not by wizards, nor by Heaven, nor by contamination, which are three other possibilities), and also that it comes from such and such a god, a god of bitterness, or a god

782 of the paternal or the maternal line, now indicate the nature of
755 the offering which must be made, the place, and sometimes even the person who must make it. Here is the detailed description, given by Viguet, of a sacrifice made for a ntukulu, a uterine nephew, who is ill : — "Suppose," says Viguet, "that I am the sick child. The bones have said that an offering must be made to the gods of our *bakokwana* (mother's family) ; so we go to our maternal relatives, to my *malume*, and ask him to perform the sacrifice. The offering may consist of a hen or an ornament like a bracelet. If it is a hen, my malume will kill it in accordance with the ceremonial rite, take a few of the feathers of the neck, which have been soiled by the blood, put them to his mouth, and spit on them, making *tsu* (the blood of the victim thus mingles with the saliva of the priest), and say (bulabulela) :

You, our gods, and you so and so, here is our mhamba (offering)! Bless this child, and make him live and grow ; make him rich, so that when we visit him, he may be able to kill an ox for us... You are useless, you gods ; you only give us trouble! For, although we give you offerings, you do not listen to us! We are deprived of everything! You, so and so (naming the god, to whom the offering must be addressed in accordance with the decree pronounced by the bones, i. e., the god who was angry, and who induced the other gods to come and do harm to the village, by making the child ill), you are full of hatred! You do not enrich us! All those who succeed, do so by the help of their gods! — Now we have made you this gift! Call your ancestors so and so ; call also the gods of this sick boy's father, because his father's people did not steal his mother : these people, of such and such a clan, came in the daylight (to lobola the mother). So come here to the altar! Eat and distribute amongst yourselves our ox (the hen!) according to your wisdom.

Then the priest takes a feather from one of the wings, a claw of the left foot and the beak, and after tying them together, attaches them to the left wrist or left ankle of the child, or to his neck, passing the string over the shoulder and under the left arm ; (all is on the left side, because it is an offering to the gods of the mother's family ; it would be on the right side if it were to the

gods of the father). These parts of the victim are called *psirungulo*, the religious amulet. 782 755

When the offering consists of a bracelet, the bones having so ordered, the priest will pour consecrated beer over it, and say his prayer. The bracelet will then be fastened to the child's foot. He may not remove it, nor exchange it for anything else : it belongs to the gods.

This description, given by Viguet, is typical of sacrifices offered in the case of disease. In the Maluleke clan the sacrifice made for a sick person is as follows. The headman takes beer, which has been specially prepared for the gods and is very much diluted, the beer called *byala bosila*, and a twig of male nkanye. He orders the patient to sit near the altar, and after dipping the twig into the beer, sucks it and says the following words :

Phaa! (this word corresponds to tsu) : this is byala bosila, you Makhima! Take it and convey it to your father Mashakadzi ; call each other and come here together to drink! Let all disease depart! Heal this man!

I must also mention the sacrifice performed in the curious ceremony of *dlaya shilongo*, in the case of marriage between near relatives (I. p. 258), and will now proceed to describe two others, viz., the sacrifice on behalf of the son who has just returned from Johannesburg, and the sacrifice of reconciliation.

When a young man, who has been absent from home for a long time, *returns to his village*, he cannot be received again into the community without special precautions being taken. If there has been a death in the kraal he must be purified from the collective contamination before eating the food of the village. This is the luma milomo (I. p. 146), and is connected with the defilement from death. Some of the provisions of the deceased, kept in a pot and diluted with hot water, must be poured between his two great toes, and he must afterwards rub them together. But, before this, a religious act is performed. Before the boy, who is on the return journey, is allowed to enter his native village, he has to stay for a short time just outside, while his father, seated at the main entrance, cuts open the neck of a hen, which he has 782 783 484

No special use is made of the *bones* of the victim, except, as we shall see later, in offerings on behalf of those possessed. The only part kept is the *astragalus*, or the *psirungulo* just described, which are tied to the person on whose behalf the sacrifice has been made, probably to insure for him a permanent blessing from the gods. 782 777

It must be observed that the sacrificial ritual, as well as the medical art, lays great stress on the sex of the offerings. As a rule, there must be opposition between the sex of the victim and that of the person for whom, or to whom, the sacrifice is made. A woman is prayed for by means of a he-goat or a cock, and a man by a she-goat or a hen. 782 755 562

What is the reason of this rule? — "Psi yaka muti," says my informant. "It builds up the village." As a village can only grow and multiply by the union of the male and the female element, so in order to succeed in any pursuit it is necessary to unite both sexes. This principle is universally applied : when a girl is ill, a boy will bring her medicine, and vice-versa. The rule is also followed in another case. It may be that a mhamba has been wrongly performed and threatens to bring misfortune instead of appeasing the gods. This mhamba must consequently be "quenched, timula" "so that it may keep quiet and cool down, because it might cause annoyance and overcome them" (Mboza). This will be done by offering a mhamba of the opposite sex, which will correct the first. So if a female nkanye twig has been employed in the funeral ceremony, when the ritual ought to have been performed with a twig taken from a male stem, the ceremony will be repeated with a male twig in order to quench the first mhamba.

The last observation to be made about the gifts presented to the ancestor-gods is that the *psirungulo*, viz. the part of the victim which is tied to the person for whose sake it has been sacrificed, must be attached to the left part of the body if this person belongs to the female, to the right if to the male sex ; moreover in the sacrifices offered to maternal gods, the attachment is always done on the left side, whatever may be the sex of the person. Why is this? Because the left side belongs to the woman, the right to the man. We have seen that this is the case in the hut (I. p. 187). 782 562

brother will be so called." Nkolele, the father of these two men, was the Libombo mhamba before them. This is another meaning of this great word mhamba. Klass was neither a gift made to the ancestor-gods of the Libombos, nor a magic object employed to win their favour, but he was the elder member of the family, the one who was the official and indispensable intermediary between all the Libombos and their gods. For this reason he was a mhamba. This leads me to propose the following definition of the word : *A mhamba is any object or act or even person which is used to establish a bond between the gods and their worshippers.*

Having thus analysed all the elements contained in the Thonga mhamba, we may safely conclude that its spiritual and religious value cannot be denied. Whatever place ritual may hold in the ceremonies of ancestrolatry, whatever mixture of devotional and magic elements may be found in them, the offering is not a mere external gift which appeases the gods by its material value, nor a simple means of coercion which forces them to submit to the will of the worshipper. By means of the mhamba the Thonga really aims at entering into relationship with those powerful spirits who control his life (1).

may be true, but as regards Bantus, they have long outgrown this stage. Even when they have recourse to magic processes in order to influence their ancestor-gods, these have a distinctive character, different from that of the ordinary magic which they practise when they wish to affect the impersonal forces of Nature. Everything done in order to obtain the favour of the ancestor-gods is a *mhamba*, not a *muri*, as I have already pointed out.

(1) Religious and magic practices are more or less mingled in Thonga ritual and it is evident that the smaller the degree of magic contained in a rite, the more genuine religious feeling there will be in it. I owe to my Venda informant the description of a sacrifice performed in his tribe for a sick child, where the two elements are combined to an extraordinary extent. It is called *the offering of the goat with clothes* (mbudzi ya u dzwindisa).

A goat is provided. It is placed before a basin of water mixed with certain drugs and forced to drink, to drink till it is fully distended, and dies. It is then skinned and cut open. The large intestine is extracted from the body, and a part of it is cut off and stitched up at one end so as to form a kind of pouch. From each limb a bit of meat is taken, and a provision of the seeds of various cereals, brought to the spot together with drugs. All these different kinds of food are introduced into the pouch, the process of filling it being accompanied by prayers to the ancestor-god. The officiant, whilst proceeding with his task, puts seeds into the goat's intestine with one hand, and, with the other, takes other seeds and places them apart. These he will keep carefully in order to sow them later on. And continually he prays: "Eat your fill and be satisfied, and leave us some for our use." Thus the ancestor-god has been fed, well and duly stuffed. The pouch is then stitched at its other end. But now the ancestor-god must be clothed

c) Prayers.

The act of prayer is called *khongota* (Ro.), *khongela* (Dj.) (the same word being also employed to mean "supplicate"); or *bulabulela*, to speak to, or scold the gods; *bukutjela* means a long, meandering prayer in which the officiant says the same thing over and over again. I have given twenty-two different forms of prayer when describing the manifold religious acts of the Thongas: two prayers of medicine men (I. 55, II. 393); those pronounced on the day of marriage (I. p. 111); of death, with the nkanye twig (I. p. 142); in the ceremony of crushing down the hut (I. 161); at the distribution of the widows (I. 208); at the death of a sister (I. 216); in the ceremony of killing the tie of consanguinity (I. 258); on journeys (I. p. 340. II. p. 394, 398); on offering the first fruits (I. 396); before the tjeba fishing (II. p. 87); when sneezing (II. 361); on offering tobacco at the altar (II. p. 390); for a sick nephew (II. p. 396); at the sacrifice of reconciliation (II. p. 399); at the worship of the Makaringe family (II. p. 403); 782

also! A strap is cut from the goat's skin and the sacrificer winds it all round the pouch. Carrying the offering with him he now goes to the grave of the grandfather, digs, and lays the pouch in the earth parallel to the body beneath; he then prays again: "We worship you, grandfather! And we have clothed you. This is your food. Eat and be full and be contented. And leave us food, plenty of food that we also may be contented, and bless the sick child." 782 789 755

Let us try to analyse this rite according to the ideas of magic which we have explained, p. 369. We are dealing here with the ancestor-god complexus. A goat is provided, a gift made. This is religion. This goat has now become one of the possessions of the ancestor-god, a part of him. Henceforth the goat represents the god and an action performed upon it will be at the same time performed on the god. The goat is filled with water to quench the thirst of the god. A pouch is made of the intestine, a part of the animal which will now represent the whole, and food is introduced into it to feed the god. All these acts are instances of *communionist magic*, and the prayer which accompanies them is the religious element of the sacrifice. Some seeds are put apart to be sown later on. As they belonged to the provision made for the offering, these seeds partake of the nature of the whole of that provision; they have entered into the ancestor-god complexus; they are therefore particularly suitable for sowing, since the blessing of the powerful god will rest upon them. This is communionist magic again, whilst the filling up of the goat with water and food and the clothing its intestine with a strap may be regarded as *imitative magic*. The placing of the pouch in the grave facing the same way as the body of the ancestor once more signifies the identity of both, and the sacrificer is definitely persuaded that by all these rites he has really exercised a strong and compelling influence on his god (See my paper on "Some Features of the Religion of the Ba-Venda" *S. A. Journal of Science*, April 1921).

Rihinga ra ndlela : a root found on the path ; it helps you to go on, though others may seek to hinder you in your progress.

Shivunge : that which attracts patients to the doctor.

Nandjiyane : that which makes his words agreeable, so that patients will like them ; (from ku nandjiya, to be agreeable).

Mvakazi, phuphuma ra matlhari : that which is used to make the slayers vomit the main drug of the *tintebe* (I. p. 479).

Mbendjula : that which strengthens all the other drugs.

These are the principal trees, or plants, used for the preparation of the powder. They must be *salted* by the addition of the *sea*, viz., of the medicines taken from the sea, which Mankhelu uses to cause rain to fall (p. 321).

The sexual character of the drugs is essential. The female are used principally for sprinkling the army and the assagais, the male for treating diseases. We find here again the law of opposition of sexes ; the military domain is the male domain par excellence : it must be treated by means of female drugs. On the contrary, when slaughtering a she-goat for the sacrifice, a little of the male drugs must be placed in its mouth and the weapon used to kill it must be smeared with the same, and vice-versa for the he-goat. "To act otherwise is taboo. All the ñanga do this" (p. 417).

There may be some true scientific elements in Thonga medical practice. Experiments have been made in using certain roots to cure certain diseases, and tradition has handed down some prescriptions from father to son. Why should there not be effective curative properties in plants of their country just as in the Cinchona bark, or in Castor oil seeds? And why should they not have discovered them? However the Native ñanga is by no means a scientific man, and the best, the most renowned, are perhaps the least scientific. Those who treat only one complaint, and only know one drug, are perhaps those most resembling real physicians ; they act on the results of experiment. But the line between science and superstition is very soon crossed, and the medical art passes with the greatest ease into the domain of magic, all the more so as the difference between Science and Magic is not perceived. *Muri*, which means originally tree, plant, medicinal herb, is at the same time any means of producing any effect, natural or super-

natural, on any influence, hostile or favourable, personal or impersonal (1). That is why the *ntjebe* shrub helps Mankhelu to attain three objects at the same time : cure a bad cough, protect the mealies, and rout the enemy.

The question has often been put : Are these medicine-men sincere? or are they mere quacks living on the stupidity of the patients whom they deceive? I am convinced, after having listened to their talk, that most of them thoroughly believe in the value of their drugs ; this does not prevent them from occasionally using tricks in order to impress their patients with their miraculous power. One of my pupils, who had accompanied a ñanga for a long time, wishing to enter the profession himself, and had thus had an opportunity to watch his master in his medical work, assured me that, as a rule, the man administered his drugs honestly and in good faith ; but if somebody came suffering from toothache and asked for relief, the doctor first procured a little worm found in the berry of a solaneous shrub called rulane. This he placed in a pot filled with boiling water. The patient had then to inhale the vapour from the pot, his head being covered with a cloth. When the inhalation was over the ñanga took a piece of charcoal and rubbed his forehead with it ; he did the same all round his eyes and told him : "Now your eyes are open and you will be able to see what it was that caused your suffering." He emptied the pot and the little white worm appeared at the bottom, resembling the caries of a decaying tooth : "This is what they had brought on you" the ñanga would add." ("They" evidently means the wizards.) This is clearly a trick pure and simple. But, according to my informant, it was also a medical treatment, because the aim of the trick was to convince the patient that he had been cured. It was thus what we should call a means of suggestion. If, after that, the suffering did not cease, the ñanga would tell his patient that he had not paid enough to effect the cure, that his ancestor-gods (those of the ñanga, who had given him his drugs) were angry at receiving such a small fee, etc. The trick of making patients believe that a harmful object has been extracted from their body is frequently used. We have

(1) The following story, which I owe to one of my colleagues, fittingly illustrates the ideas held by most of the Thongas concerning *muri*, remedy. A man of the Libombo clan found a bottle filled with a white salt which he at once recognized as being most probably a *muri*. He picked up the bottle and kept it carefully in his hut. One day, feeling unwell, he thought the occasion had come to use his precious drug. His wife bade him be careful, but he secretly swallowed a good dose. Was it not a *muri* ? He was poisoned, and would have died if my colleague had not succeeded in saving him by means of an antidote.

755 seen another instance of this (p. 188). It is in keeping with two ideas
756 which are very familiar to Natives and which we shall meet with again later, viz. that disease is a material thing and that it is generally caused by this thing being introduced into the body by wizards.

The mixed character of the medical art of the primitives, which is so evident in their medicine-men, will appear clearly as we continue our study.

II. *Medical Practices.*

752 *Surgical cases* are treated in the worst possible way, any intervention with a knife being looked on as absurd, if not culpable (1). When dealing with *sores*, the aim of the ñanga seems to be to conceal them under a black powder, so as to give the patient a false impression; he thinks himself healed, as he can no longer see his sore. Mankhelu used to grind the bark of the *Ndjupfura* tree (a tree with a white sap), and put the powder on the sore to make it dry up, renewing the application on the fourth day, then five days later, then six days later. — For *wounds* Kokolo used the sap of the *Shilangamahlo*, letting it fall in drops on the bleeding wound. The *Nkahlu* (p. 329), with its milky sap, is commonly used for this purpose. — "But," says Kokolo, "the chief is *Shilangamahlo*." *Bruises* are treated by the *rimba* method. When a person has fallen and some complication is feared, a fire is made ; when there are enough glowing embers, and the soil is very hot, the ashes are pushed aside and a little sand taken from the river is poured on the spot, and some nkuhlu leaves on top of it. The patient leans over the place "which has been so treated ;" this is an unexpected application of the principle "similia similibus curantur ;" — as the soil has been burnt, but afterwards "quenched" (timula) by the cool sand, so the bruise will be prevented from burning him dangerously! — *Decayed teeth* are not extracted, properly speaking ; they are broken down with a piece of iron, on which the Native dentist beats with a hammer

(1) Gungunyana, who killed thousands of poor Ba-Chopi without the slightest remorse, could not conceal his horror of Dr. Liengme, who dared to amputate limbs, or to cut open the body in order to cure patients !

751 the disease, and it is the *batukulu* of the chief, his nephews, the sons of his sisters, who are sent to procure it. Are they not the favourites of their maternal uncle? (I. p. 222). Nobody could suspect them of bringing misfortune into the village of their *bakokwana*! The particular ntukulu who must render this service to the country is designated by the bones. The bones also indicate the village of the neighbouring clan to which he must go to fetch the virus. The serous fluid is taken from old people or from children, who have no sexual intercourse ; we already know the reason for this. The ntukulu inoculates himself and his comrades and returns home ; when their pustules are ripe, they inoculate all the members of the clan who have not yet suffered
[784] from the disease.[1] From this day begins for the whole clan a distinct marginal period, with all the taboos accompanying the critical phases of the life of the community. No one is allowed to wash his body. Absolute continence is imposed on all. Salt is prohibited, as it is said to make the blood flow more quickly in the body and it may cause the wounds to become sore.

164 But in addition to the ordinary taboos, some other measures are
751 taken which are dictated by the special nature of small-pox. This
●755 disease, amongst Black people, manifests itself in two forms, which may be called the white and the black. The former is much milder than the latter. In it the pustules are large, superficial, scattered all over the body and well separated from each other ; the skin is discoloured over them and becomes whitish ; they soon dry up and do not leave deep marks. In the second form, which is the confluent and haemorrhagic type of the disease, the pustules are small, black, continuous with each other, and full of blood ; they soon discharge a nasty fluid ; fever is high and death may intervene.
751 The whole aim of the treatment is to promote the mild, white form
755 of small-pox and to prevent the black form. It is therefore taboo to eat any meat containing blood, which is black and must therefore be avoided. On the contrary, fish meat is allowed because it is white and contains no dark blood. Another device of Native doctors to obtain this result is to place before the eyes of their patients grains of mealies, which are white like the desired pustules and are also similar to them in form, and to prevent their

[1] [Small-pox--analyst]

seeing grains of Kafir corn, which are of a dark colour. Grains of mealies are softened in water, pierced through and made into necklaces which patients wear round their necks, whilst the spikes of Kafir corn, which are to be found in every hut fixed to the reeds of the roof as seeds for the next season, are carefully taken away and hidden somewhere in the bush during the whole time of the epidemic. Should the malignant form of small-pox develop notwithstanding all these precautions, the headman will shake his head and tell the parents of the patient : "Hahlani! — Make an offering." But in this particular hahla no real offering will be made, and the prayer will not be addressed to the ancestor-gods. The principal words of this prayer are : "Mavuzane, dhlula!" These are Zulu expressions which correspond in Ronga to : "Mabutise, tlula!" i. e. "Questioner, pass on your way!" Who is this Questioner? It is small-pox itself, Nyedzana, which is more or less personified and looked on as a real and terrible visitor coming at given intervals to examine the country and search for sinners. The great sin which Questioner especially wishes to discover is *buloyi*, murder by witchcraft. Let the patient then confess the acts of bewitchment which he has committed, and he will be spared. If he conceals them, small-pox will kill him. Suppose that the patient so seriously ill is a grown-up woman, the wife of one of the men of the village. Her parents will first be called. The headman and all the inmates of the village will attend the meeting in the hut. "Confess your guilt!" they will all say to the woman. She may answer : "No! I am not a witch" *(A ndi noyi!)* They insist : "Do not hide anything." And under the strain of their questions she may say : "Yes! I am a walker in the night! I have eaten so-and-so! I have eaten my own child!" If the patient is a little child, his father will have to make the confession in his stead. He will take the infant in his arms and say : "Mavuzane dhlula! Questioner, pass on your way! Yes! We are baloyi. I have taught my child to eat human bodies! But we will not persist in our bad doings! Go away and leave us in peace!" (1).

751 755 755 782 783

(1) We have here one of the cases in which an impersonal force of Nature is treated as if it were a personal being endowed with superhuman power, and invoked. The prayer 782

755 When the disease has run its course, and the pustules have dried
783 up, a day is appointed on which the marginal period will come to an end, and the clan return to its regular life. This return is marked by the special *Reintegration and Purification rites*, which aim at removing the defilement acquired by the disease. The main purificatory rite, that which regularly closes a marginal period, is *the smearing of all the huts* with a new layer of clay, either mixed with cow's dung or not. The old ground is for ever covered. It is a way of saying : "Behold, the former things are passed away, everything has become new." On the morning of that day, every patient must go and wash his body *on the road*, as if to pour all the filth of the disease on to it. Moreover, the ashes found in the fire-places inside the huts, the necklaces of mealie grains, the implements used by the people who have been seriously ill, sometimes their garments, the ochre with which they anointed themselves, all the things which were employed in connection with the scourge, are collected and thrown indiscriminately on to the large paths, preferably on the places where two roads cross each other, a rite which is by no means altruistic, and still less antiseptic! We shall see shortly how it is to be explained.

828 *Nervous diseases* are peculiarly feared by Natives. *Melancholia*
755 is believed to be caused by those spirits of possession which will form the subject of the next paragraph. *Idiocy* has no remedy ; nothing can be done with an idiot : "It is death! It has found him!" (Mankhelu). *Delirium* (mihahamo) is cured by *Mbulula khutla*. The patient must enter the hole from which clay is taken for smearing the huts, and is washed with a decoction of the drug when in this hole. Moreover a stick of the same tree is cut and kept in the roof of the hut, and the person who sleeps with the patient will take it every night and place it near his head. "Thus we kill delirium." (Mankhelu). — Another form of insanity is called *rihuhe*, "the disease which comes from far away with the winds" — "ri pfa timhehwen" (Mankhelu). A drug is prepared with the *shiromo* root, mixed with the lung of a sheep and the blood

782 to Small-Pox (with capital letters) may be compared with that pronounced when an imprecation has been uttered or when someone wishes to cancel his oath (p. 399).

found inside its heart. All these things are burnt in a broken pot, and made into a medicinal powder. The patient is brought to the broken pot; a cut is made in his head, so that it bleeds abundantly until the pot is filled with blood; the blood boils in the pot, it solidifies and is burnt. The ñanga takes it and buries it in an ant's nest, according to the timula rite described below. The wound of the patient is filled with the medicine; he eats the meat, he sleeps: — "If you have been equal to the occasion, he will be cured; you have given him lots of sleep. — You have killed the *rihuhe*" (Mankhelu). The *wutleka* disease means both the *convulsions* of little children generally explained by the agency of Heaven, called Tilo (p. 431), and epilepsy. The great remedy for the latter disease, which greatly terrifies the Natives, is provided by monkeys and baboons. Pieces of their skin and their excrement are roasted in a broken pot. Some pieces of lion's skin are added; when the powder is prepared, the limbs of the patient are smeared with it; his body is also sprinkled with a decoction made of these drugs, or an ointment is prepared from them and applied to the head, the fingers, and all the limbs, which are then pulled with some force (olola). The patient is laid down and leaves of the hlampfura tree (Kigelia pinnata) are put on his head: — "He sleeps, he passes water, he evacuates stools, he is cured!" But to confirm the healing, a very curious ceremony is performed which reminds one of the rite of the scapegoat, so often met with amongst primitives. The doctor makes the image of a monkey (habu) with a kind of grass called *muhulane*; this image is smeared with the drugs just described, and fastened to a long rope; a little boy must then drag the dummy out of the village, and all his comrades hit him with sticks, saying: "Go away! Go away!". He runs until he reaches a tree far away in the bush. All the boys hang the figure to it, and it remains there swinging in the wind. The disease has thus been expelled.

When folly is accompanied by great excitement, and there is danger of the people of the village being mishandled by the sufferer, he is prevented from doing harm by means of fetters. These consist of a log of wood pierced through by a lozenge-shaped hole into which the foot of the madman is introduced; a wooden bolt is

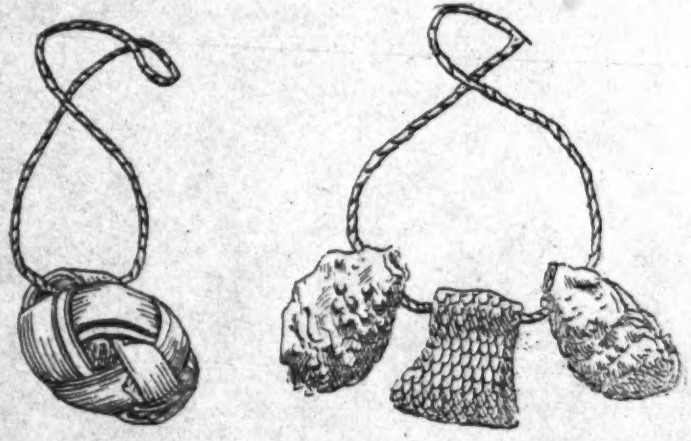
757 cautery is done *with the foot*. This is undoubtedly a curious proceeding! Kokolo gave me a detailed description of it. A hoe is made red-hot ; an obliging individual lends his foot, a foot which has rarely been encased in a shoe and possesses a sole with a skin like leather! This natural sole is rubbed with the leaves of a plant called *Shungwe*, which has been chewed and mixed in the palm of the hand with saliva and grease. For the same purpose Mankhelu employed a fat containing among other ingredients, the following drugs : *Hlampfura* and *Ñwambula-wamitwa*. Then the obliging operator places his foot on the red-hot hoe and, with a quick movement, plants it on the spot to be cauterised, the patient being hardly able to bear the contact. As for the owner of the foot, the horny sole is apparently so thick that he feels no pain at all. This is the remedy for the *shitjebe blood*, probably pleurisy.

● 755 783 The last practice to be noticed, the one by which the doctor gives his patient a clean bill of health, is the *hondlola* or *hondla* (Ro.) or *horola* (Dj.) ; it is a ceremony of purification, performed *after the cure is effected*, to remove the defilement (nsila) of disease. "In this way," says Mankhelu, "we disperse (hulurisa) the blood which has made the patient ill, so that it cannot return to him violently." The hondla is obligatory after all serious diseases and after weaning. I have described how it is performed in this latter case (I. p. 59). According to Mankhelu, a sacrifice is always made in connection with the hondlola. In the case of adults, a goat is slaughtered. The doctor having carefully taken a piece of each limb of the goat, prays "by means of them" to his gods, saying :

> You so and so! This is my ox which I have slaughtered... Give me strength (ndji thwasane matimba) that I may cure this man. I have no other drugs! I do not add any others to those which you gave me. So give me strength ; accept me with both hands, that I may be able to cure.

The psanyi of the goat is then mixed with various drugs, especially the *Shireti* and the powder of the calabashes. The patient, sitting on a mat, rubs his whole body (tihorola) vigorously with this psanyi; all the particles (timhore, or timhorola, or

timbhorola) which fall on the mat are carefully gathered together, and the bones are consulted to know where they must be thrown (See Letter D). This is the *tumba* rite, following the hondlola. The bones may perhaps have indicated a hole in the trunk of a tree, or the river, or the mud of the marsh, or an ants' nest, or the entrance to a molehill. The physician takes the timbhorola in a piece of broken pot, or sala shell, and introduces them into the hole, which he closes with a little clay ; he has with him water in a little calabash, of which he takes a sip and says : "Tsuu! or



Fowa and timfisa, medico-magical amulets.

pheuuu! Let the misfortune remain here." On the way home no looking back is allowed : this is taboo. Should the tumba be made in an ants' nest, and should the ants themselves close the hole, this is a very good sign! The bones may perhaps order the particles contained in the sala shell to be placed in another kind of ants' nest, made of grass ; the ñanga will go during the day and prepare a place for the shell. In the evening, when it is dark, he will put the shell into the hole without looking back towards it. The ants will take all the timbhorola down into their nest, and so "the misfortune will remain with them." (Mboza.) — The hondlola rite is generally accompanied by the preparation of *protective amulets (timfisa)*. The nails and hair of the patient are cut, put into small bags of lizard skin and tied round his neck.

751 One frequently meets people wearing this ornament, which also
755 aims at making the cure permanent. Sometimes the nails are those
783 from one hand and foot only. The *psirungulo* i. e. the astragalus of the slaughtered goat, or the beak, claws and some feathers of the hen (p. 410) are also tied round the neck of the patient. This is the *religious amulet*, whilst the lizard bag is the *medico-magical* one. Convalescents are moreover provided with the *fowa*, a kind of rattle, consisting of a root called *sungi* (there is no connection between this word and the sungi of the circumcision school, I. p. 77) contained in a kind of round box made of palm leaf which is tied round the ankle. This is intended to protect them against the perspiration of those who have sexual relations (p. 358). They sometimes wear a little piece of reed filled with a protective powder, as do also nursing mothers during the whole nursing period (1) (I. p. 48).

[527] The hondlola rite also marks the moment when sexual relations, which had been suspended during the disease, are resumed. Celebrating as it does the victory over disease, the day of hondlola
756 is regarded as a fête-day. Beer is prepared as a mark of gratitude to the doctor and "to rejoice his heart." It is also the day of reckoning ; the physician must be paid. This individual has not, however, waited until now to ask for a "refresher." From the commencement of the case it has been necessary to *pfula hwama*, that is to say, to lift the cover of the medicine wallet by means of sixpence or a shilling. At times he has been very anxious to change the medicine, in order to produce a greater effect ; on such

751 (1) I may here mention two other articles which are frequently worn by Thonga Natives : one is the dried seed-pod of the flower of the large Protea bush (sugar bush) which is so common on the slopes of the Drakensberg. It looks like a hard brownish cone, all covered with concentric layers of little square ledges. This cures *vertigo*. Why? No doubt because when it is turned round rapidly, it makes the spectator giddy. It is hung round the neck with a string. This curious remedy is brought back from the Barberton mountains by those who go to work in the Transvaal. The second is a bracelet often seen round little children's wrists, and is made from the skin of a kind of tawny mole, called *tju'unyana*, which digs its burrows almost on the level of the ground. You can see the earth a little raised all along its track. The *Filaria* parasite, which is often met with in our tribe, also creeps under the skin in a similar way (p. 343). See illustration No. 5. These are two new instances of the principle "similia similibus curantur." Bags filled with snake powder are also often worn as a preventive.

village is at once removed. Leprosy is called *nhlulabadahi*, the disease which is stronger than the doctors. It is very much dreaded ; lepers are not, however, segregated ; they live in the village with other people and even attend beer-parties, but they bring their own mugs, whilst every other guest receives a drinking utensil from the master of the village. 758

Another disease which is believed to be contagious is "possession" by the *Bandjao spirits*. Should you pick up on the road some object which belonged to one of the possessed, his madness will jump to you (tlulela). — Epilepsy is also dreaded on that account. A nursing woman must not see any one suffering from an attack of this disease, or the child which is on her shoulders will become epileptic. 753 828

Speaking of the conception of disease, I must remind the reader of the fact that *sexual relations* between the inhabitants of the village are believed to aggravate the condition of the patient dwelling in it (I. p. 133, II. p. 358), and are consequently forbidden during epidemics and in any case of serious illness. Hence the precautions which convalescents must take of wearing the *sungi*, as we have just seen. 753 834

4) The special rites which mark the end of an illness throw much light on the Thonga conception of disease. A serious illness constitutes a marginal period either for the individual concerned, or, in the case of an epidemic, for the community, and the hondlola rite is the method by which the patient is reintegrated into society ; it clearly has the character of a passage rite. The rubbing with psanyi, the removal of the defilement of disease, the throwing away of the "timbhorola," the cutting of nails and hair, all these are rites of separation from the period of disease, whilst the feast of the hondlola day, and the resuming of sexual relations (1) are rites of reintegration. In the disease of possession, as we shall see it is the reintegration into the society of spirit-possessed persons and amounts to an initiation. 753 783 184 755

(1) We often hear of a Christian woman, who has gone to a heathen medicine-man for treatment, having sexual intercourse with him. We generally attribute this fact to immorality alone, but it was probably a part of the treatment, at the precise moment when sexual taboos were removed.

753 In the case of an epidemic, it is the whole clan which passes
184 through the marginal period, and all its members have to perform
755 the reintegration rites, by means of which they re-inter upon
783 normal life.

But these rites have another meaning as well. They aim at "dispersing the disease." In the hondlola proper, the particles which have fallen on the mat during the rubbing operation are cast away into an ants' nest; this is the *tumba*, which corresponds to the throwing away of all the "nsila", i. e. the "filth" of the small-pox patients at a cross-roads. In this case the body of the patient is also washed at that spot; this is likewise done at the conclusion of measles. The same idea underlies all these customs, that by their means the patient or clan will *definitely get rid of the disease*. Disease forms an organic whole, an important element of which consists of the dried perspiration of the patient, the dirt covering his skin, the implements he has used during his confinement, the dust of his hut, etc. All these are thrown either into an ants' nest to be disposed of there by the insects, or on to the road to be trampled under foot by travellers. The latter, by coming into contact with this filth, will at the same time take upon themselves the disease which it represents and carry it away into far distant countries. Thus the request of the medicine man will be granted, (I. p. 55, II. p. 393): "Let the bad blood go to Nkhabelene, to Shiburi... to the ends of the earth." I do not think that in this apparently hostile act of throwing the dust of a contaminated hut on to the road Thongas are actuated by the wish that travellers should be infected with the disease. Their principal aim is to disperse the contagion according to the principles of communionist and imitative magic. It is however dangerous to tread upon it. It is one of those "makhumo" which can cause disease.

000 The medical system of the Bantus is mingled to such an extent with superstition and error that very little reliance can be placed upon it. The question which I put at the beginning of this section is therefore very difficult to answer. What is the duty of the White Government in regard to the Native quacks? The ideal would be to replace them by fully qualified, civilised doctors. As this is impossible, let medical missionaries at least be encouraged, and their number increased, and

158 "Ha!" they said, "he has the gods (or he is sick from the gods, a ni
753 psikwembu)." Thus the first signs of possession seem to be a
756 nervous crisis, but also the occurence of certain suspicious symptoms : a persistant pain in the chest, irrepressible hiccough, unusual yawning, emaciation without apparent cause, etc. These symptoms, however, are not sufficient grounds for a diagnosis, and the bones are always consulted in order to arrive at a conclusion. The amulets of the patient (called "his shade") are placed on the mat, and the bones thrown near them. We shall see, under letter D, how they must fall to confirm the diagnosis. Should they do so, a second consultation takes place in order to ascertain to what doctor the treatment must be entrusted. There are medicine-men who are specialists for this disease. They are not true *ñanga*, but are called *gobela* (dji-ma), at least amongst the Ba-Ronga, who suffer from possession more than the other clans. These gobela have formed many rival schools in which the drugs used, and the rites followed, differ slightly ; the schools of Kkongosa, Sindondondo, Ñwatshulu, who are men, and those of Ñwamutheto (in the Shifimbatello district) and of Thambula-nyoka, viz., Snake-bone, both of whom are women, etc. Ñwashinhwana was treated by a disciple of Khongosa ; Mboza by Ñwatshulu.

III. *The Treatment of Possession, or Exorcism.*

755 In former times, the only remedy was waving a large palm-leaf (milala) in front of the patient. This was deemed sufficient to "scatter the spirits." Now the treatment is much more complicated. Though it varies slightly in the various schools above mentioned, it comprises four principal rites : the drum performance, the ablution in the gobo calabash, the drinking of the blood and the hondlola ceremony. In the Khongosa treatment the gobo rite comes first, and is called *baselo*. A certain root, the *phuphumane*, is prepared, and dipped into water in a big calabash cut in two so as to form a large basin. The mixture is stirred ; an abundant foam is thus produced and the patient must

wash himself with it ; or he must take the basin on his knees, suck in a little of this foam between his lips and spit it out in the direction of the four winds, saying *tsu*, evidently as a preliminary means of propitiating the possessing spirits, which will be invoked and entreated to reveal themselves in the following rite. 755

In the case of Mboza, the calabash came as the second phase of the treatment, the first being the drum performance.

1) The drum performance (gongondjela).

This extraordinary rite reminds one of the witches' sabbaths of medieval times by the infernal din and uproar through which the possessed will have to pass. However, notwithstanding the external resemblance, it is totally different, having nothing to do with witchcraft proper, and being only a "medical practice" in the eyes of the Thongas. — A strange medical practice, indeed, devised rather to kill than to heal the patient! 755 787

In the first place the bones must be consulted to find out in what spot the sabbath should be held. If the bone which represents the patient falls in the middle of all the rest, this shows that the tambourines, or "tom-toms," must be beaten in the interior of the hut itself. If the bone falls on the outer edge, the sabbath must be in the doorway ; if it falls further to one side, beyond all the others, the treatment must take place on the village square (hubyen) ; if it rolls still further off, and if the astragalus of the roaming gazelle is also separated from the rest, this shows that the meeting must take place in the bush, quite away from the village. If the bones remain silent, revealing nothing, then the throwing will be continued behind the hut, or on the square, until they speak. It is also necessary that the four shells Oliva, and Cypraea, which form part of the set of bones, should fall on their backs, exposing their crack or mouth. This signifies that the possessing gods, the spirits, will come out ; there will be an egress for them, whilst if, on the contrary, the shells fall differently, shewing their convex sides, the diviner will say : "Ma tikarata ntsena" — "all your trouble is in vain :" the sabbath

755 will have no effect ; no means of egress for the gods will be found!
787 (Compare Letter D. Divination). But a way will soon be found to get over this difficulty, and it will not be long before the sabbath is in full swing.

755 In the hut, right in the middle, the patient is seated. Dejected, with downcast eyes, and fixed expression, he waits... Everyone throughout the country knows that to-day, to-night, on the appearance of the new moon, the strange and terrible exorcism will begin. All those who have once been possessed will officiate. The director of the ceremony, the *gobela*, who has been appointed by the bones, holds his tambourine, made of the skin of the big varan lizard stretched over a circular wooden frame. (See Illustration p. 124, No. 9.) In the calm quiet of the evening air the first blow is struck. It reverberates, and is heard afar off on all sides ; it penetrates the thickets and reaches the neighbouring villages, where it inspires a strange emotion, a transcendent delight born of curiosity, malice, and I know not what feeling of unconscious satisfaction. All rush in the direction of the well-known sound ; each one hurries to the hut of the possessed ; all desire to take part in this struggle, this conflict with the invisible world.

They all assemble, some with tambourines, others with large tin cases picked up on the outskirts of the town (tins in which kerosine oil is sold in Lourenço Marques), still others with calabashes, filled with small objects, which do duty as rattles (ndjele, yin-tin) ; and now, crowding round the patient, they begin their hideous din, striking, brandishing, shaking their various instruments of torture with all their might and main. Some lightly touch the head or ears of the unfortunate sufferer. It is a frightful hubbub, which continues, with but short interruptions, during the whole night, or until the performers in this fantastic concert are compelled to stop from sheer fatigue.

755 But this is merely the orchestra, the accompaniment. That
533 which is most essential is the *singing*, the human voice, the *chorus of exorcists*, a short refrain, following on a still shorter solo, repeated a hundred or a thousand times, always with the same object in view, toward which all strive seriously and persistently, namely to compel the spiritual being, the mysterious possessing spirit which

is there present, to reveal itself, and declare its name, after which it will be duly overcome. These songs are at the same time both simple and poetic. They address the spirit in laudatory terms, trying to cajole it by flattery, to get on the right side of it, and thus induce it to grant the signal favour of a final surrender. Here follows the first of these songs which I heard. — One day, when I was travelling, hearing the uproar of a sabbath behind some bushes, I jumped off my waggon, and found myself right in the midst of an exorcism ceremony. 755 533

Shibendjana ! u vukele bantu !
Rhinoceros ! thou attackest men !

These were the words shouted by the singers round a poor woman who appeared to be in some sort of a dream, and was seemingly unconscious ; my arrival had scarcely any effect on the unearthly hubbub, in spite of the fact that the appearance of a White man in the villages of that district was generally regarded as quite an event.

When the hours pass without any visible effect being produced on the patient, the chorus is changed. The night may be far spent, and day-light at hand :

Come out, spirit, you make us weep till sun-rise !
Why are we thus ill-treated ?

Or, perhaps by way of bringing greater pressure to bear, they will threaten to leave the spirit, for good and all, if it will not heed the chidings of the frenzied tambourine players :

Come, let us be off ! bird of the chiefs ! Let us go away (as thou treatest us so harshly).

The melodies of the exorcists' incantations have a singularly persistent, incisive, penetrating character. I had the opportunity of noting down one which was sung with a strange alto accompaniment in fourths. This tune is No. 32 in the collection (p. 291). The disturbing effect of this music was intensified by a very pronounced sforzando when the chorus took up the dominant phrase. This is the song, as universally known and sung in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques.

Awake ! Awake ! The daylight breaks ! Now the bird is singing !
Play also, Zulu, play in the bush. Now the bird is singing.

755 The meaning is not difficult to gather. "Day is dawning.
533 Awake then, sleeping spirit! (This spirit is called Mu-Ngoni, Zulu, for the case is supposed to be one of Zulu possession). The birds are already sporting in the thickets. Soon we shall be obliged to go to our work and leave you! It is your last chance; come out and salute the morning and reveal yourself to us!"

This insistence is renewed. The patient begins to show signs of assent. The shikwembu is preparing to come out. Those present encourage it:

Shawane! Mu-Ngoni. Huma ha hombe hi tindlela ta hu lulama...
We salute thee, spirit! Come out gently by the straight way.

Meaning: Do not hurt the afflicted one! Spare him!

755 Overcome at length by this noisy concert the patient enters into a condition of nervous exaltation. The crisis occurs, evidently as a result of hypnotic suggestion. He rises and dances wildly in the hut. The hubbub is redoubled. They implore the spirit to *declare its name*. A name is shouted, a Zulu name, that of some ancient departed chief, such as Manukosi, or Mozila; sometimes, strange to say, the name of Gungunyana himself, although he was still living. An old woman, formerly possessed, told me that she cried out the name of Pitlikeza, and it appeared that this Pitlikesa was an itinerant Zulu bard, who wandered about the district of Delagoa when she was a young girl. She was quite convinced that the spirit of that individual had taken up its abode in her, years after Pitlikeza's passage through the country.

In the case of Mboza the patient was covered with a large piece of calico during the whole drum performance. A first medicinal pellet was burnt under the calico, in a broken pot full of embers, a male pellet (made of the fat of an ox or a he-goat); no result having been obtained, a second pellet, a female one, made from the fat of a she-goat, was introduced. The exorcist, Nwatshulu prayed to the gods as follows:

Help us, you Ngoni spirits (or gods, psikwembu). I received this medicine from your hands, so "they" must come out at once from my patient. Should he have swallowed a snake, or a toad, should these prevent the spirits from coming out, let these animals run away, far away, and provide an egress for the spirits.

When the second pellet was nearly all burnt, Mboza began 755
to tremble ; the women sang louder. The *gobela* shouted amidst the uproar : "Come out, Ngoni!" Then he ordered the singers to keep quiet, crept beneath the veil and said : "You who dance there, who are you? A Zulu? A Ndjao? Are you a hyena?" The patient nodded his head and answered : "No!" — "Then you are a Zulu?" — "Yes, I am..." And, during a pause, he said : "I am Mboza." Mboza was a Ronga who died in Kimberley many years ago. The uproar was resumed and the third pellet was introduced. This is the "pellet par excellence," neither male nor female, the one which is expected to have the strongest effect. Mboza suddenly rose, threw himself upon those present, beat them on the head, scattered them all right and left, and ran out of the hut under the impression that the spirits were beating him! "Every one saw that day that I had terrible spirits in me." In the crisis of madness the patient sometimes throws himself into the fire and feels no pain, or falls in catalepsy (a womile, lit. becomes dry), and strikes his head against wood, or the ground, without feeling anything.

Sometimes the concert of tambourines continues for three or four days, a week, or a fortnight. I know a woman (since converted to Christianity under the name of Monica) who underwent a seven days treatment of this description. All depends upon the patient's nervous condition, and upon the degree of depression to which fasting and suffering have reduced him.

The spirit, having disclosed its name and title, is henceforward known and can be interrogated. Spoon, the diviner, whose wife had been twice possessed, once by the Zulus and once by the Ba-Ndjao, told me the story of one of these conversations. He happened to be in one of the neighbouring villages when he was suddenly sent for in great haste and told that his wife, who had attended a sabbath at such and such a spot, was taken with the madness of the gods. He went as fast as he could to the place indicated, and found that his wife was really beside herself, and dancing like a person possessed. He had never before noticed in her the slightest sign of possession. The spirit began to speak, as soon as she was somewhat calmed down, and gave answers to the

755 questions put to it : "I entered into this *ligodo*, i. e. into this body, this vessel, in such and such a manner. Her husband had gone to work in the gold mines. I entered into him while he was seated on a stone, and when he returned home I left him and entered into his wife." — "Are you alone, spirit?" is the usual question, to which it may reply : "No, I have my son and my grandson with me ;" and, if the witnesses suspect that there really are several spirits in the patient, the tambourine symphony is again resorted to, in order to dislodge the entire company. Sometimes the possessed pronounces as many as ten different names.

Or it may be that the gobela only asks the name of the father and grandfather of the possessing spirit, in order the better to know the latter with all his genealogy. Such was the case with Mboza. "My father is Ndlebende," said the spirit. — "Ho!" answered the gobela, "then you are Mboza, son of Ndlebende." And he identified the spirit in that way.

755 533 It may be that, at the first sitting, the spirit will claim some satisfaction : a "nturu," a piece of calico of such and such a colour. It is also generally at this time that the patient will *sing his song*. Every possessed person invents a song which will be henceforth *his*, and by means of which crises, or trances will be provoked or cured. Nwashinhwana sang :

Alas ! my father ! Medicine-men can do nothing for me !
Who will deliver me ?

Mboza :

I am the one who wanders about, I come out from the body of magicians.

These songs are generally in Zulu, and it is asserted that, even if the patient does not know this language, he will be able to use it in his conversation, by a kind of miracle of tongues!

The first rite is now completed. It has succeeded in forcing the spirit to reveal its name (1).

754 755 (1) Exorcism by drum beating is the classical method of expelling spirits. Of late years, since 1910, another method has been invented called *ku somba* which, strange to say, is connected with a new word borrowed from European Animism, the word *shipoko*, now current in Thonga terminology. Shipoko comes from the Boer spook, which means ghost. According to the Native idea, wizards have power to enslave ghosts and make them work in their own fields during the night. They can also send them to take possession of their victims and torment them. If a patient is supposed to

2) The rite of the gobo basin.

When Mboza had finished revealing the name of the spirit possessing him, he had to undergo the rite of the *gobo*. His head was dipped into this, not entirely, but so that his eyes, at least, were plunged in the water. Then the gobela said : "Open your eyes." He felt a sensation of burning, and saw nothing but a red space with black dots running to and fro through the field of vision. He was kept in that position for a good long time. Then he raised his head, and the water ran all over his face and on to his body : he was purified (a basile). But this rite does not seem to be strictly a purification rite. By this kind of baptism the patient is said to have "crossed the sea." He enters upon a new life, and it is clearly a rite of passage. Now he will be able to speak, because "he has seen everything." It is the drug which "makes one see" (muri wa ku bonisa). Some are said to have learnt divination by this gobo ablution. 755

Having undergone these two first parts of the treatment, Mboza says he slept soundly. Next day, came the third.

3) The appeasement by blood (ku thwaza).

During the confabulation following the concert of tambourines, the spirits speaking through the mouth of the patient, although

be possessed by one of these shipoko, the exorcist will proceed with the femba in the following manner. He prepares a little crown made of medicinal roots woven together, similar to the *hari* which women place on their heads when carrying their water jugs. The patient lies down in his hut, surrounded by the mathwaza beating their drums. The magician touches one of his limbs with the hari, blows upon it, brings it close to his lips and draws in his breath. If nothing happens, he touches another limb, the arm, the side, the leg, the head, drawing in his breath each time, searching for the ghost. Suddenly he is seized by a fit, and falls down unconscious ! The ghost has entered him, he has swallowed it. His attendants raise him up and take him outside the hut. They begin to ask him : "Who are you ?" He tells them his name ; he also informs them that he has been sent by so and so, a wizard. This wizard may be "an inhabitant of your village, someone with whom you eat porridge every day !" The shipoko continues his confession :" Yes ! this man has sent me to kill the patient." 754 755

We shall hear more of these shipoko when dealing with witchcraft. We find here a curious mixture of witchcraft and the ideas of possession, with the addition of a European element. My informant assures me that this femba rite is quite modern, and I can readily believe it.

755 perfectly distinct from him, had already demanded some presents; but there is one in particular that must be given in order to

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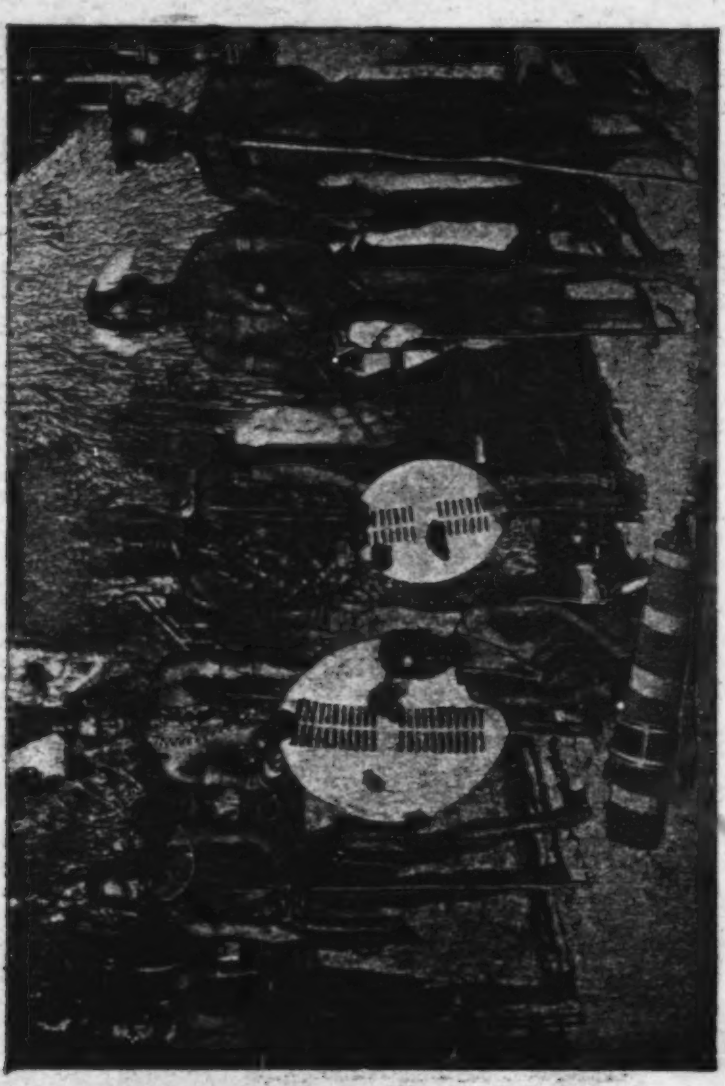

The great exorcist Hokoza with his companions (Tembe).

propitiate them and to get rid of them (hangulasa). The refrain of the second verse of the exorcists' song, which I have already quoted, mentions this offering, and half promises us, as an

755 inducement to the spirit to disclose its name. This is what is called the *thwaza*.

Aba ka Khongosa ba thwaza hi huku!

meaning : the patients of Khongosa's school treat with fowl's blood. Blood, an abundance of blood, is necessary to effect the cure of the patient, and to obtain an assurance from the objectionable tenant in possession that it will do no further harm. As a general rule it is given something better than fowl's blood. In most schools a she-goat is taken, if the patient be a man, or a he-goat in the case of a woman. The exorcist who has been in charge of the cure orders the by-standers to repeat the song which had induced the first crisis. The possessed again shows excitement, and exhibits the same symptoms of raving madness that I have previously described. Then the animal is pierced beneath the foreleg (in the case of Mboza this took place at the entrance of his own hut), and the patient throws himself on the wound, greedily sucking the flowing blood, and, in frenzy, filling his stomach with it. When he has drunk his fill, he has to be dragged away from the animal by main force ; certain medicines (one of which is called *ntshatshu*, apparently an emetic) are administered, his throat is tickled with a feather and he retires behind the hut to vomit all the blood he has absorbed. By this means the spirit, or spirits, have been duly appeased and expelled.

The sufferer, who is now recovering, is next washed again, and smeared with ochre. The spirits will have ochre on the day of thwaza, and torment him if he does not satisfy their desire ; Sometimes the *kunga* rite is also practised for the exorcised, viz., no one is allowed to speak to him before having given him a present. (Compare I. p. 124) (1).

756 (1) The accompanying illustration represents a well known exorcist named Hokoza, who had won great fame in the Tembe and Maputju regions, a kindly man who had even some sympathy for Christianity, to which most of these magicians are strongly opposed, as may easily be understood. According to the Rev. A. Aubert, Hokoza used to begin teaching the magic art to his patients on the day of thwaza. Whilst the exorcised was seated in his hut, after having vomited the blood, some of the disciples of the magician took that part of the skull of the goat to which the horns are attached, its astragalus and gall-bladder, and went to a certain spot to hide these objects. When they returned to the patient's village, the latter began to dance, to sing his song, to put

755 It is interesting to note what is done with the different parts of the sacrificed goat : the *bile-bladder* is stuck in the patient's hair according to custom (p. 50), to symbolise the happiness and good fortune that the sacrifice has ensured ; afterwards he is clothed with *strips of the skin* of the animal. All the tambourine players, who are themselves *mathwaza*, i. e. who have already gone through the torture of possession, decorate themselves also with these strips of skin, crossing them over the breast. The strips must be tied together with *munganazi*, i. e. strings made from the roots of the munga tree, which have a pleasant odour ; this has the property of "rejoicing the nose" of the spirits, and is always used in the ritual of possession. In former times people wearing strips were often met with, as these ornaments had to be worn, at that time, during *a whole year*, until the hondlola. — The *flesh* of the sacrificed goat also supplies the means of finally exorcising these mysterious spirit powers. From each limb a small piece is cut, and these pieces are cooked in a separate saucepan, with a powdered drug prepared for this special purpose. The head exorcist breaks off the branch of an acacia bearing enormous shiny white thorns, on each of which is spitted a piece of meat. The patient runs at full speed towards the branch, and seizes a piece of meat between his teeth in passing. While eating it, he rushes towards the East. He comes back, seizes another piece in the same manner, and runs towards the West, and so on towards all the four cardinal points. In this way he propitiates the gods, the spirits of every country, in whatever direction they may lie. The young *mathwaza*, viz., those who have lately passed through this initiation, must also seize the pieces of meat with their teeth, but not the gobela, nor the old mathwaza. This is one of the rites of the Khongosa school. Ñwatshulu used not to observe it. The remainder of the goat is then cooked and eaten. A feast is celebrated, in which the chief exorcist dances and sings his song,

756 himself into a state of trance, and ran outside in search of the hidden objects. It was a species of trial ; Hokoza wished to know if the exorcised possessed the gift of divination. If he succeeded in finding the astragalus, he tied it to his left foot ; the gall-bladder he fixed in his hair. Hokoza was then satisfied and predicted a bright future for his pupil.

all the people clapping their hands (wombela), to encourage him, as an accompaniment. — The *horns and hoofs* will be carefully kept, and placed on the roof of the hut, just over the door (shiranwin) by which the afflicted one enters, evidently to protect the abode from malign influences. — The *astragalus* will be tied, together with the strips, on the sternum of the patient. — The *bones* of the goat are the objects of special care. They must not be broken to eat the marrow, but burnt in the shade of a large tree, where it is "cool." So the possessing spirit will also be cool (titimela) and not too wild. Sometimes they are preserved in a special pot, and burnt on the day of the hondlola.

The period of convalescence then begins. It lasts one year, and is a distinct marginal period, as clearly appears from the fact that sexual relations are absolutely forbidden during that phase, and until the hondlola. It is also, more or less, a period of apprenticeship, as the possessed will become an exorcist himself, if his magical powers become sufficiently developed. He accompanies the gobela everywhere, assists him in his cures, and so learns the art of exorcism. The apprentice will also have to practise the rites of protection, which I shall shortly describe, and which are obligatory during the whole period of convalescence, and even later.

4) The final purification of the hondlola and investing with amulets (timfisa).

As we saw, the hondlola, the removal of defilement of disease, is necessary at the close of any illness. So, when a possessed person is regarded as healed, he will have to pass through this rite. It can however only be carried out on the one condition that the possessed husband, or wife, has remained in a state of continence during the period of convalescence. In order to know if they have obeyed this law, a fowl will be placed on the head of the patient. If he, or she, has been continent according to order, the bird will remain quiet; it will not fly away, even should someone approach and pass close by. If it flies off making a great noise, the angry exorcist will also take his leave, saying:

[for the individual whose spirit was possessed — Analyst]

755 "You have sinned and, in so doing, have marred the efficacy of all
758 my medicines (mi honile miri)." On the other hand, if the rule
787 has been properly observed, the bird will remain quite still, when it will be stabbed with a knife and its blood will be used in connection with the hondlola friction. Afterwards the fowl will be plucked and eaten by the village folk, but neither the patient, nor his spouse, nor the exorcist-in-chief will be allowed to partake of it. Thenceforth the husband and wife are permitted to live together as in the past.

755 The hondlola rites seem particularly complicated in cases of possession. Their sequence was as follows in that of Mboza. 1) He had to pay £ 1 to Ñwatshulu, as a reward for his medical attendance. He gave him the money, together with a pot of beer. 2) Then the doctor took his *gobo* calabash, stirred the medicine in order to make it froth abundantly, invoking his gods all the time, and saying : "Awake, you who spit on the road, you, Zulus, who have ears capable of hearing, etc... 3) Then he shouted : "Mboza! Eat!" The exorcised had to kneel down and swallow the froth. 4) The exorcist took mafureira fat, mixed it in his hand with medicinal powder, smeared and rubbed the body of the convalescent, from the knees to the feet, the arms, the chest, the belly, and the head. 5) He cut the nails of the hands and feet with a knife, and also a little of the hair on the forehead, and put the whole into the timfisa bags (p. 471) together with medicinal powder. 6) Then followed the ordinary hondlola friction. A pellet (shibuwu) had been prepared by crushing roots of the *bamhuntane* and *shilewana* trees in a mortar, and a hen had been killed. Mboza sat on a mat and the doctor rubbed his whole body with the pellet. He gathered the *timhora*, the particles fallen on the mat, mixed them with the blood of the hen, and again rubbed the patient. 7) Fresh timhora fell on the mat. They were gathered up a second time. Some were put into the amulet bags, the remainder were made into a ball, which was not thrown away as in ordinary diseases, but carefully placed at the back of the hut, where the forked branch was to be planted.

ooo Let us remember that, in the case of the exorcised, the hondlola

Let us remember that, in the case of the exorcised, the hondlola 755
does not only mean the re-introduction of the patient into the 756
society of the healthy, but his reception into the society of the magicians. It is the last act of *initiation* : he himself becomes a magician, a doctor able to treat those who are possessed. This new dignity is symbolised by the *shiphandje* (forked branch) which will be given to him to-day, as it is to medicine-men (p. 388), or diviners (See later on). It was Nwatshulu who chose and cut the branch for Mboza from the tree called *shiralala*. He dug a hole in the back part of Mboza's hut, chewed his sungi or ndjao root, and blew against the foot of the branch before planting it in the hole. Then he made the branch firm in the ground, and hung to it the baskets full of drugs and calabashes full of medicinal powders which he gave to his disciple. This branch will be the drug store of the new magician, the place where he keeps all his magic drugs ; it will also be his *altar* (gandjelo), not the altar of the ancestor-gods, who have no part here, but that of the possessing spirits, to whom he will also henceforth address his worship. (Compare with Mankhelu's forked branch, letter D). This leads us on to the next division of the subject.

IV. *The new Condition of the Exorcised.*

It is interesting to note the stages in the process of initiation 756
through which the possessed passes in the different acts of his 184
treatment. The tambourine performance has provoked, or accentuated, the manifestation of his dual personality, viz., the person possessed and the spirit possessing. The baptism in the calabash has helped him to cross the sea and to reach the land beyond, the land of miracles and of magic powers! By the drinking of blood, he has become a superior being, a man who does not fear that which makes others tremble ; he has *thwaza*. This word is the same as that employed for the renewal of the moon (p. 306) ; like the moon, he has been born again ; a new light has appeared after a period of darkness. He has entered a new life. The period of convalescence, with its taboos, is his last trial ; by the hondlola he finally enters the society of the initiated.

between the animal and these objects, and we know how quick the Bantu mind is at discovering such relations between men and animals. 787

2) The Consultation of the divinatory bones and the rules for their interpretation.

I owe to a Tembe informant the following full description of the sequence of acts performed in a consultation of the divinatory bones. Suppose one of the inmates of the village to have been suddenly taken ill. The people who dwell in the same hut will at once go to the headman, even if it is night-time ; he will come, inspect the patient, and, having convinced himself of the seriousness of the case, he will start immediately for the diviner's village, not forgetting to take with him the necklace of the patient with his protective amulets (timfisa p. 471) ; if the man did not wear timfisa, the headman will replace these by some roots of a common plant, the tjeke, p. 14, or even of a common grass, the ntlangi ; these roots will be rubbed against his forehead and against his chest and will then be called his *ntjuleko*. Having reached the diviner's village, the consultant briefly states the object of his visit. A mat is unrolled and the ntjuleko placed on it, somewhere at the side ; the diviner takes all his bones in his hand, holds them firmly, and having chewed a little piece of a magic root, (1) spits on them and throws them on to the mat, saying with emphasis : "Mhamoo!" Those attending the consultation answer in the same tone : "Hizwaa! Si ya vuma!" — "Yes! We are agreed." This throwing is only preliminary. By spitting over his bones the diviner wishes to awaken them (pfusha) to make them see (hanyanyisa). He then passes them to the consultant, who will himself throw them throughout the whole consultation, the diviner only holding his little stick and pointing to them in order to explain their significance. 787 755 791

In the first place the consultant takes the necklace of the patient 787 755

(1) Mankhelu used for this purpose the bulb of a Liliacea called shirungulu, which has an agreeable scent.

787 or the above-mentioned roots, and rubs three or four bones against
755 them. These objects having been in close contact with the patient and containing his "nsila," the exudation of his body, establish a connection between him and the bones. The bones will then "know him" and throughout the operation these astragalus, which have been, so to speak, anointed with the "nsila" of the patient, will be watched with special interest ; if they are "doubtful," hesitating (gome), the diviner will also have doubts about the revelations made by the others (1).

The consultant throws the bones for the first time, the diviner having asked : "What about the patient?" If the bones fall in a manner which corresponds to the state of the patient, all is well. The diviner will show with his stick that this correspondence exists. It is a proof that the bones have really awakened and are disposed to speak. The question is then put a second time in order that the first reply may be confirmed.

The way is now open for further inquiries ; in the first place, what is the cause of the disease? Does it come from the ancestor-gods? From a male ancestor-god? From one on the paternal side? From great-grandfather so and so? From great-grand-mother so and so? When the bones answer in the negative, another name is tried, and so the consultation proceeds by a process of elimination ; the names of deceased great-uncles, parents, uncles, even of a son who may have died quite young are pronounced successively. If the ancestor-god who caused the disease is not found in the paternal line, then the same questions are put regarding the maternal ancestors, the bakokwana, the diviner himself suggesting to the consultant the names which are to be mentioned. It may be that the bones, which are often thrown two or three times for each name, will designate one of the ancestors. Then begins another series of questions. Why is the god angry? Is it because the patient has neglected his duties towards him? What does he ask for in order that he may be appeased? Goat's flesh? Clothing? Beer? Mealies? Who shall bring (tamela)

(1) If the diviner or his client consults for himself, he rubs these bones against his own forehead and his chest before throwing them on to the mat, and the connection is thus established.

787 the offering? The headman? An adult? A child? A certain
765 relation who is on bad terms with the patient and has sworn never to enter his village again? If the latter is designated he will have to come, after having first made the offering of reconciliation (described p. 398). The bones must likewise designate the person who will have to stab the victim, as also the person who will say tsu and pronounce the prayer. This may be a baby, and, in

Consulting the bones. *Phot. A. Borel.*

that case, his father will take him in his arms and pray instead of him. Women are often designated, as we saw on p. 411.

But it may happen that the bones do not agree that the disease has been caused by an ancestor-god at all. The consultation then takes another turn. Was it caused by a wizard? By a witch? Is it so and so? Or so and so? If no affirmative answer is given there then remains still another alternative. Has the patient been contaminated by the defilement of the bush (the dust of conta-

787 minated huts thrown down at crossroads) or of the footprints
755 (mitila, p. 478)?

Such is the procedure followed in a consultation regarding disease. It will be modified according to circumstances, when the advice of the bones is asked for in other difficulties.

If from the beginning there is no correspondance whatever between the manner in which the bones have fallen and the case for which they are consulted, if they "refuse to speak," the diviner will perhaps roll up his mat and leave the hut ; he will then try to throw the bones on the square, or in the bush, or behind the hut, and the consultation will be continued there till a clear answer is given.

787 In order to see if the bones have really consented to speak, three or four things are specially examined : the *side* on which the bones have fallen, the *direction* towards which they look, their *disposition* or the position they have taken in regard to each other, and the *relation* of the male and the female bones towards each other, viz., are all the male or all the female bones on the same side? Each object can fall on two sides, all of them having a *convex* and a *concave* side. If they fall so as to show the convex side (bukhatsha position), they are said *to be full* (ku tala), or *to stand on their legs* and to *march forward* (ku famba) ; this is the *positive side*, which I indicate by + ; if they fall showing their concave side (lwandla position) they are *empty* (ku pshya, image of a lake which has dried up), or lie *on their back* : this is the *negative position* which I indicate by —. In the first case, the person or principal represented by the bones is happy (tjaka), at peace (rula), active, marching, powerful ; in the second he is tired (karala), ashamed (tingana), powerless, dying (fa). Astragalus of goats, and sheep on their convex side, show that the inhabitants of the village, or the chief, are in good health and good spirits, working, succeeding ; if on their concave side, they show that those persons are lying ill or dying. On the other hand, the astragalus of the ant-bear in the positive position indicates that the digger is digging a grave, that the ancestor-gods are awake and probably ready to punish, etc. So it would not be correct to call the convex the favourable, and the concave the unfavourable side. The first is the *active*

Reproduced from "Les Ba Ronga."

The case of the sick mother.

a) *The case of the sick mother* (p. 557).

787
0755 In the centre we see *She-Goat* —; the mother is sick, on her back! Above, the red Antelope, Malumbi + and below, Oliva +, are looking towards her ; these are the malignant influences which have thrown her into this state. *Cypraea* — wide-open, on her left, shows that she is suffering from dysentery! On the extreme left we see *Weaned Kid* + and *Young Goat* + on their legs, walking ; they are going towards *He-goat*, the father, who is also +, not quite discouraged, and pointing toward the *kanye*, the medicine by which he hopes to cure his wife. By so doing he keeps in check *Wild Sow* — the ancestor-god, who is thus prevented from adding his hostile influence to those already active. Near him is *Kid* — a young boy on his back, quite in despair, who keeps close to his mother. The father, having spoken with his children, starts for the bush, following the three arrows shown at the bottom of the plate. On the right, we see *Gazelle, Duiker* + ; this is he again returning from his walk as a traveller (the duiker, being always on his legs, often represents travellers). He holds the drug he has dug up *(Kanye —)*. But this kanye stone is on the bad side ; itwas difficult to find the roots, which penetrated into the soil, as do the two protuberances of the stone! Moreover two *Crocodiles' stones* speak of death, and the little *Oliva* + looks at the father in a hostile manner. The bones of the upper part, on the right, contain no encouragement whatever. *Wild Pig* + is an old relative coming to pay a visit to the sick woman ; he is accompanied by a girl, *Young She-Goat*, below him, who also goes towards the village with lamentations, shown by the open *Cypraea* in front of her ; on the top, *Ant-bear* + comes to dig the grave! Near him *Duiker* — is on its back, without strength, whilst *Tortoise* —, in the left hand corner, is also lying on her back ; no agreeable perspiration, no peace, no happiness.

The bones here give a triple revelation ; they depict the actual position, show its cause, and indicate its course and the remedy ; the disease is serious, but there is ground for hope if the father finds the right drug. If the astragalus of the He-Goat had been on its back, and that of the Wild Sow on its legs, directed against the patient, the case would have been hopeless.